



Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



Volume 21 Issue 2

Summer 2018



Apparch's programme of Summer Visits is now well into its stride and everybody who came on the Patterdale Rock Art trip in May will know that these are well-worth attending. Patterdale looked gorgeous on a sunny Bank holiday weekend – and the rock art was pretty good too! Still to come, as I write this, is the evening visit to the Sarah Losh church at Wreay on Monday 11th June and the day trip to Stanwick and Pierce Bridge on Sunday 8th July. Check the website for details.

It is a bit early to be thinking about Autumn lectures, but your committee has been busy and you can read about the first part of the programme on the last page of this newsletter. Two excellent speakers will get us off with a bang as we learn about the Celtic kingdom of Rheged in the North West and its Anglian counterpart, the Kingdom of Northumbria, in the North East. To get us into the mood for Christmas, we'll finish the year with a talk on the deserted medieval village at Thorns at Ribblehead.

Elsewhere, you may have gathered from reports in the Herald that the Appleby Heritage Action Zone project is slowly gaining momentum. It's still too early to talk about Appleby Archaeology's role in the HAZ but you may be interested to know that exciting plans are being laid in consultation with the HAZ project officer. Watch this space for further details.

Enjoy your archaeological summer. Martin Joyce

Morecambe Bay—Headlands to Headspace Community Project



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Louise Martin, Cultural Heritage Officer of Morecambe Bay Partnership gave a well informed and entertaining presentation about the Morecambe Bay Headlands to Headspace (H2H) community project to the Archaeological group in March. This project is being led by the Morecambe Bay Partnership with support from a wide range of organisation including many groups that make up the Morecambe Bay Local Nature Partnership. It is now in the fifth year of a 5 year project covering an area of 500sq.km. supported by a £1.9 million grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund.

Louise's talk concentrated upon the archaeological heritage of the Morecambe Bay area and demonstrated the commitment, skills and techniques of the many volunteers and professional archaeologists involved. This started with desk based assessments leading on to on-site identification, recording and decisions on protecting and preserving the sites of interest, which ranged in age from the Neolithic to the second World War.

Her 'tour' around the Bay started with the rich military history of Barrow and Walney. Concrete pillboxes and other defensive structures including an artillery coastal searchlight emplacement known as Hilpsford Fort, the rusted remains of weaponry and an old rifle range were highlighted along the western coast of Walney and the docks at Barrow. Many of these structures need conservation and protection from the encroaching sea and the elements.

She then moved further east to Gleaston Castle. This was probably built as a manorial residence for defence against the Scots in the late 13th century, only to be abandoned in 1458. The remains of three towers and curtain wall still stand, while new techniques in aerial surveying have provided evidence of earlier structures including a ridge and furrow system, a possible trackway to the north east of the castle, with terracing and building platforms within the castle courtyard.

Birkrigg Common was the next stop. The common is rich in both flora and fauna and a variety of Bronze Age sites including burial cairns, hut circles, a large enclosure and stone circles. A short video showed volunteers clearing vegetation away from the immediate area of the stone circle, revealing a second outer ring of stones previously hidden during the summer months. Opening up such sites will increase their visibility, encouraging wider interest and hopefully help to protect them from accidental damage.

Further still along the coast Louis described two towers above Grange over Sands. Hampsfell Hospice was built in 1846 to provide shelter for travellers with an inscription above the door welcoming 'rich and poor' and three poems on letter boards inside. Kirkhead Tower is a delightful early 19th century summer house with lovely views across the bay and tantalising hints of much earlier (pre-) historic use with evidence of a ridge and furrow marks and a possible round house.

Warton Crag, near Carnforth, is an Iron Age hillfort on the Heritage at Risk schedule. A lidar survey suggested it was non defensive and more likely a hilltop

enclosure dating back to the Neolithic.

Louise concluded her tour at Jenny Brown's Point at Silverdale, where an impressive sea wall has been uncovered by storms in recent years. It was constructed circum 1874 as part of a sea defence system but was later abandoned. She spoke in some detail about attempts to unravel the origin and function of a limestone chimney with recently rediscovered remains of a small jetty and other buildings nearby. This local landmark is a Grade 2 listed building dating from late 18th Century and marked on the 1919 OS Map as a 'ruin'.

Its uncertain function and exposed position made it a priority for closer investigation, so volunteers with professional guidance and support researched the documentary information available and compiled a permanent record of the site. This was followed by geophysical and aerial surveys, culminating with an on-site excavation in November 2017, which found evidence of copper smelting process with flues, slag and a firebox. Ongoing analysis of the slag and nearby soil samples will hopefully clarify what went on at Jenny's Point.

Louise's enthusiasm and the obvious enjoyment of the volunteers seen in short videos was both inspiring and entertaining. Louise received an enthusiastic round of applause.

Phyl Rouston March 2018

Stanwick Iron Age 'Stronghold'

Professor Colin Haselgrave of Leicester University gave the final Appleby Archaeology presentation of the winter season. Professor Haselgrave is a leading expert on the Iron Age in Britain based upon his research of the huge Iron Age stronghold at Stanwick, near Scotch Corner.



He began his talk with a brief summary of archaeological excavations at Stanwick Camp or 'Stronghold', the 5th or 6th largest Iron Age fort in Europe. The site covers an area of about 3 km². It is estimated the 10km perimeter rampart originally consisted of some 155,000m³ clay and stone, and took 4 million hours to construct. The first scientific excavation was carried

out by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in 1951-52, who unearthed some spectacular finds, including a remarkable sword and scabbard close to the north-west entrance. There were further smaller excavations, but it was not until the 1980s, that Colin became involved at the request of the North Yorkshire County Council. Subsequent excavation was limited to the 'Tofts', an area surrounded by massive ramparts, suspected of representing the first significant fortification of the site.

Colin and his associates identified three main periods of construction. The first lasted from around 75BC to approximately 25BC with evidence of only rather intermittent occupation. During the middle period from 25BC to about 35AD, a ceremonial enclosure was constructed along with a number of large timber buildings and an earth and stone rampart which probably supported a palisade fence, similar to the one at Sutton, near Doncaster. The site was occupied throughout this period although the population was probably rather small. Artefacts dated to the period include pottery from France, Roman coinage and metalwork and flagons and amphorae. All of these are very rare in northern England but imply some connection with the Mediterranean region. There was also signs of brass working, including the manufacture of Roman style artefacts and evidence of regional trading suggested by pottery querns and salt briquetage. The final phase of occupation lasted from 35AD to around 70AD. Many of the timber buildings were replaced by stone at that time and the outer perimeter boundary of the fort was enclosed and embanked. An increase in continental trade is marked by the discovery of Gaulish Samian ware, exotic foodstuffs such as fish sauce, olives and wine, an Obsidian cup from Italy and pieces of Italian glass.

Colin went on to discuss Stanwick in its more local context, noting there were obvious connections with the multiple sites at Scotch Corner where there had been intensive activity between 70 & 80AD. Finds there included Samian ware, gaming counters, pellet moulds, a denarius dating from 152BC and a Roman glass jug with a representation of Bacchus. An earlier earthwork known as the Scots Dike connected the rampart at Stanwick to the River Swale near Richmond, although this appears to have fallen into disuse by the time of the initial building at Stanwick. A major hoard of Iron Age metalwork discovered at Melsonby, just outside the Stanwick perimeter in 1843 (now held in the British Museum) also testifies to its connection with the surrounding region.

Colin concluded with a discussion about the purpose of the site. He suggested it had probably been the royal estate of Queen Cartimandua of the Brigantes tribe and intended to impress by its size, rather than as a fortification. It seems to have been really too large to defend. Famously, the Roman historian Tacitus related the history of Cartimandua's alliances with the Romans, her treachery against the British King Caractacus and her feud with her ex-consort Venutius. That

story finds support from evidence provided by archaeology. Colin finished by musing on the remains that must still lie hidden beneath this very extensive site.

After taking questions from an appreciative audience, Professor Haselgrove was warmly thanked for his fascinating insights into the early history of northern England.

Richard Stevens April 2018

The Kirby Stephen 'Loki Stone'

The existing Church at Kirkby Stephen dates from the thirteenth century with fifteenth century alterations. In 1870 it was restored, and various carved stones were discovered including one known as the 'Loki Stone'. This is an Anglo-Danish cross-shaft, probably of the tenth century (but perhaps earlier) made of yellowish white sandstone that depicts Loki. The stone is rectangular and about one metre high. Loki is depicted on the stone with horns and a beard and is bound with chains. He does not look happy. A simple interlaced geometric pattern is carved on the sides and a view of Loki from above is carved on the top. Loki is a figure in Norse mythology with a status like the gods. It is often said to be the only carving of Loki to have been found in Britain although some believe that Loki is also depicted on the Gosforth cross and on a carving found at Gainford in Durham. Many Danes and Norwegians settled in Cumbria during the ninth and tenth centuries alongside the existing Celtic and Northumbrian (English) populations, abandoning their 'old religion' to become Christians. It is believed that the first church to built in Kirkby Stephen was constructed in about 850 and that the 'Loki Stone' was somehow associated with it, perhaps as a hedge between the old and the new.



The 'Loki stone' can be seen facing the south door in the church. The other stones that have been found are displayed at the foot of the tower.

Adrian Waite June 2018

Altogether Archaeology Meeting , Feb 2018

Paul Frodsham (of Brackenbar excavation days) and David Petts (Durham University) were talking at an Altogether Archaeology meeting in February this year and I decided to go along and listen.

Paul gave a comprehensive report about the excavation of the 14th century St Botolph Chapel at Frosterley in Weardale. This unearthed clearly defined walls and a curious alignment of stones along the north side of the building, fragments of a carved standing cross made of Roker dolomite, an early font made of Frosterley marble and medieval pottery and a variety of metal objects, rosary beads, rings and painted wall plaster. Perhaps the most amazing find was a skeleton dated to about 900 AD with a piece of a standing cross and beautiful carved head with zig-zag hair design nearby.



David followed with a fascinating review of the changing early medieval cultures in Northern England during the early Middle Ages (410 – 1066 AD). He began by describing the several kingdoms of that period and related them to the influx of Anglo Saxons and Vikings. He then went on to suggest the change in building style during the 8th – 9th centuries, from round house with enclosures to



Urien, King of North Rheged (c490-590) and his raven

rectangular buildings without enclosures, appeared to correlate with an increase in the seasonal movement of livestock (transhumance) in response to large-scale monastic land ownership. He also discussed the possible changes in the way people might have expressed their status and power, illustrating this with a description of the settlements at Burwens and Ewe Close, and the rule of Urien, King of Rheged, the "*rightful owner of Llwyfenydd*".

Both talks have been written up in illustrated booklets, which can be obtained from Altogether Archaeology on request.

Carol Dougherty March 2018

Walks & Talks

Summer events

Evening Trip to Sarah Losh Church at Wreay

Monday 11th June

Not really archaeology but very interesting nevertheless. The church at Wreay is an astonishing architectural gem - one of the most interesting buildings in England. In the history of the architectural crafts and their revival in the 19th century it is unique. Meet at 7.30 in Wreay. There will be a charge of £3.00 for the services of our guide.

Guided trip to Stanwick Camp & Piercebridge Roman site

Sunday 8th July

While the talk from Professor Colin Haselgrave is still fresh in the mind, we have organised a tour of part of the site (it's rather huge, so we won't be seeing all of it) conducted by David Mason, the County Archaeologist for Durham CC. To make this up into a full day, Dr Mason will also take us on a tour of the Piercebridge Roman site. Transport by car sharing.

Winter lectures

Medieval Northumbria/Appleby

Fiona Edmunds

Thursday 11th October

The Dark Age Anglian Kingdom of Northumbria and its links with Appleby

The lost early medieval kingdom of Rheged

Ronan Toolis

Thursday 8th November

The ancient Kingdom of Rheged's location has been a mystery for centuries. Archaeologist Ronan Toolis thinks that he may have located the seat of its power at Trusty's Hill in Galloway.

Thorns - a deserted Medieval Village at Ribblehead

David Johnson

Thursday 13th December

High on the limestone fellsides near the Ribblehead Viaduct lie the atmospheric ruins of Thorns, a medieval settlement. After two years of intensive surveying and excavation, Dr David Johnson has been able to construct a comprehensive picture of the history of this fascinating site from monastic times to the present.